

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
OMB-01 ACDA-12 IO-13 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02
DOE-15 CEQ-01 EUR-12 MCE-00 TRSE-00 HEW-04 AGRE-00
/144 W

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R 111122Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0820

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 5599

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PPDC, IN, MNUC, ENRG, MASS, TBIO, TPHY

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA APRIL 10

1. SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR AND DUBS MET WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA FOR AN HOUR'S DISCUSSION ON U.S.-INDO RELATIONS. SUBJECT MATTERS TOUCHED UPON WERE THE DESAI VISIT, NUCLEAR ISSUES, CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS, AND RHESUS MONKEYS. AS-RANI, JOINT SECRETARY AMERICAS DIVISION, MEA, SAT IN ON THE MEETING.

2. DESAI VISIT. DUBS NOTED THAT WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING PRIME MINISTER DESAI AT WASHINGTON IN JUNE. THE BASIC OUTLINE OF THE VISIT IS ALREADY FAIRLY WELL ESTABLISHED AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF ANY SPECIAL WISHES THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT HAVE. AS WE LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE, DUBS NOTED, WE MUST FIND A WAY TO CONTINUE TO BUILD A CONSTRUCTIVE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP DESPITE SOME TROUBLESOME ISSUES WE FACE. MEHTA SAID THAT DESAI LOOKS FORWARD TO BUILDING ON THE PERSONAL RAPPORT THAT HE ESTABLISHED WITH THE PRESIDENT DURING THE LATTER'S VISIT TO NEW DELHI. FROM THE INDIAN SIDE, IT IS HOPED THAT DESAI'S VISIT
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WILL SERVE TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING IN THE U.S. OF INDIAN VIEWS ON A VARIETY OF IMPORTANT WORLD ISSUES. MEHTA ADDED THAT THERE IS A BROAD SIMILARITY OF PURPOSE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND THIS SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND AS DIFFICULT BILATERAL ISSUES ARISE ON WHICH THERE ARE HONEST DIFFERENCES OF OPINION.

3. NUCLEAR MATTERS. ON TARAPUR, DUBS NOTED THAT IT IS CLEAR WHERE THE U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH STANDS ON THIS ISSUE. THE MATTER IS NOW BEFORE THE NRC, AN AUTONOMOUS BODY. IN REVIEWING THE CURRENT EXPORT LICENSE FOR TARAPUR, THE NRC SEEMS TO BE SEEKING IRONCLAD ASSURANCES THAT THE ENRICHED URANIUM AND BY-PRODUCTS THEREOF WILL NOT BE MISUED. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH HAS PROVIDED RESPONSES TO A SERIES OF QUERIES POSED BY THE NRC, AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT A DECISION ON THE LICENSE WILL BE MADE WHEN THE NRC NEXT MEETS ON APRIL 17. TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, DUBS SAID THAT THE USG HAS TAKEN NOTE OF THE PM'S CONDITIONS FOR INDIA'S ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH SAFEGUARDS. EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WILL BE DONE TO MOVE ALONG THE PATHS DESAI HAD OUTLINED. FRANKLY, HOWEVER, WE ARE CONCERNED LEST THESE CONDITIONS BE TIGHTENED OR EXPANDED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE MET BY THE US AND USSR. WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE SUPPLY OF HEAVY WATER TO INDIA, DUBS COMMENTED THAT THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH HEAVY WATER MIGHT BE TRANSFERRED ARE NOW UNDER REVIEW IN WASHINGTON. DR. NYE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS MATTER WITH VELLODI IN NEW YORK THIS WEEK. DUBS THEN BRIEFLY TOUCHED UPON THE EFFORTS UNDER WAY TO INHIBIT PAKISTAN FROM ACQUIRING A RE-PROCESSING FACILITY. WASHINGTON'S EFFORTS WERE NOT ONLY RELATED TO OUR GLOBAL NON-PROLIFERATION EFFORTS BUT TO ENHANCING REGIONAL STABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA. IT WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT PAKISTAN THOUGHT SUCH A REPROCESSING FACILITY NECESSARY IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS SECURITY CONCERNS VIS-A-VIS INDIA. DUBS WON-CONFIDENTIAL

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DERED WHETHER THE GOI HAS CONSIDERED AGREEING TO PAKISTAN'S PROPOSAL FOR A SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE IN ORDER TO RELIEVE PAKISTAN OH SOME OF ITS CONCERNS.

4. IN RESPONDING, MEHTA UNDERLINED THAT ALL NUCLEAR QUESTIONS ARE CONSIDERED BY THE GOI IN THE LIGHT OF WHETHER THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE DISCRIMINATORY OR ADVERSELY AFFECT INDIA'S ABILITY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH RESPECT TO THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. HE THOUGHT THAT INDIA HAD SET A GOOD EXAMPLE AS A NUCLEAR POWER, NAMELY, BY IMPOSING UPON ITSELF UNILATERAL RESTRAINTS IN CONNECTION WITH FURTHER NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS AND THE NON-DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IN THE LIGHT OF INDIA'S RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR, PRIME MINISTER DESAID'S CONDITIONS SEEM EMINENTLY FAIR AND REASONABLE. HE NOTED THAT IF THE TARAPUR APPLICATION WAS NOT FAVORABLY ACTED UPON SOON, THE ISSUE COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE DESAI VISIT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 5599

6. MEHTA COMMENTED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION ON THE NEUTRON BOMB WAS CLEARLY IN THE SPIRIT OF MEETING THE CONDITIONS THAT DESAI HAD VOICED WITH REGARD TO ACTIONS BY THE NUCLEAR POWERS THEMSELVES. ON THE QUESTION OF THE SANWFZ, HOW COULD INDIA ISOLATE THIS QUESTION FROM ASIA AS A WHOLE? (IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HE HAD CHINA IN MIND.) NEVERTHELESS, IT MUST HAVE BEEN NOTED THAT INDIA ABSTAINED ON THIS RESOLUTION DURING THE LAST SESSION OF THE UNGA, RATHER THAN VOTE AGAINST IT, AS INDIA HAD PREVIOUSLY DONE. MEHTA WAS SOMEWHAT EVASIVE IN ADDRESSING THE PAKISTAN REPROCESSING ISSUE, OFFERING NO COMMENT ON US EFFORTS TO INHIBIT THE PAKISTANIS FROM TAKING THE REPROCESSING ROUTE. HE SIMPLY NOTED THAT REPROCESSING IS STILL VERY MUCH OF AN OPEN QUESTION AND WONDERED WHAT ANSWERS WOULD COME OUT OF INFCE. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE RECALLED THAT INDIA'S DECISION TO GO INTO REPROCESSING WAS WORKED OUT IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA'S LONG TERM ENERGY NEEDS.

7. CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS. DUBS RECALLED THAT THE USG HAD TURNED DOWN THE SALE OF A7'S TO PAKISTAN ON GROUNDS THAT THIS AIRCRAFT WOULD INTRODUCE A NEW SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEM INTO SOUTH ASIA, POSSIBLY STIMULATE AN ARMS RACE, AND HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE MILITARY BALANCE AND THE NOR-CONFIDENTIAL

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MALIZATION PROCESS IN SOUTH ASIA. HE WISHED TO ALERT MEHTA TO SOME OF THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE NOW BEING ASKED IN CONNECTION WITH INDIA'S INTEREST IN THE PURCHASE OF A DEEP PENETRATION STRIKE AIRCRAFT (DPSA). IF SUCH A PURCHASE WERE MADE,

THE USG COULD EXPECT PRESSURES FROM PAKISTAN TO RECONSIDER SALE OF THE A7. INDEED, THE QUESTION OF AIRCRAFT SALES TO PAKISTAN HAD ALREADY BEEN RAISED BY THE PAKISTANIS AT A HIGH LEVEL IN WASHINGTON. MOREOVER, IF INDIA SPENT BILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR SUCH AN AIRCRAFT, QUESTIONS ARE LIKELY TO ARISE IN CONGRESS IN CONNECTION WITH U.S. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, BOTH BILATERAL AND VIA INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. FINALLY: MEHTA SHOULD KNOW THAT THE USG HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT REGARDING APPROVAL FOR THE SALE OF THE VIGGEN AIRCRAFT TO INDIA. SINCE THIS AIRCRAFT CONTAINED U.S. COMPONENTS, THE U.S. HAS A VETO RIGHT OVER THE SALE. WHILE NO FINAL DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN PRIOR TO DUBS' DEPARTURE ON APRIL 4 FROM WASHINGTON, THE INCLINATION IN WASHINGTON WAS TO TURN DOWN THE SWEDISH REQUEST.

8. MEHTA, IN RESPONSE, SAID INDIA DOES NOT WANT TO FUEL AN ARMS RACE IN THE SUBCONTINENT. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOI HAD TO PAY DUE ATTENTION TO ITS DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES IN THE LIGHT OF PAST HISTORY WITHIN THE SUBCONTINENT AND TO KEEP IN MIND BROADER CONTINGENCIES. INDIA HAS NOW REACHED THE POINT WHERE IT MUST REPLACE AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE OBSOLESCE. (IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT MEHTA, WHO WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED HAS BEEN DUBIOUS ABOUT, IF NOT DOWNRIGHT OPPOSED TO, THE DPSA PURCHASE, DISCUSSED IT AS IF IT WERE NOW IN THE CARDS.) INDIA WOULD NOT BE INTRODUCING A NEW WEAPONS SYSTEM INTO THE REGION SINCE PAKISTAN ALREADY HAS THE MIRAGE 5, WHICH HAS A SIGNIFICANT COMBAT RANGE. IN ANY CASE, THE PURCHASE OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS SHOULD BE VIEWED IN THE TOTALITY OF INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS. THE QUESTION SHOULD BE ASKED WHETHER INDIA IS A CONFIDENTIAL

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MILITANT AND AGGRESSIVE POWER OR WHETHER IT IS DEFENSIVELY ORIENTED. HISTORY SINCE INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DEMONSTRATES THAT INDIA IS NOT AGGRESSIVELY ORIENTED -- TERRITORIALY, POLITICALLY OR ECONOMICALLY. BEARING IN MIND THE LEAD TIME THAT IT TAKES TO BUILD UP AN INDIGENOUS CAPABILITY IN CERTAIN WEAPONS FIELDS, NO GOVERNMENT IN NEW DELHI COULD AVOID DECISIONS CONNECTED WITH THE MODERNIZATION PROCESS OF ITS ARMED FORCES. THERE IS NOT INTENTION OF STEPPING UP OVERALL DEFENSE EXPENDITURES, WHICH HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY LIMITED BOTH AS A PERCENTAGE OF GNP AND A PROPORTION OF NATIONAL EXPENDITURES.

9. RHESUS MONKEYS. WHILE NOT WISHING TO MAKE A BILATERAL REPRESENTATION, DUBS CALLED ATTENTION TO THE INCREASING AMERICAN PUBLIC ATTENTION BEING GIVEN TO INDIA'S BAN ON THE EXPORT OF RHESUS MONKEYS. TO MANY AMERICANS, THIS IS SIMPLY SEEN AS SEVERELY RESTRICTING THE U.S. ABILITY TO PRODUCE MEDICINES SUCH AS POLIO VACCINES. IT IS HOPED THAT SOME SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND TO THIS PROBLEM. MEHTA LISTENED CAREFULLY AND NOTED

THAT FORTUNATELY INDIA DID NOT HAVE A MONOPOLY ON THE EXPORT
OF RHESUS MONKEYS.
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